

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 TRSE-00 PRS-01 USIA-01 L-01

/041 W

-----115565 282248Z /64

R 281817Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5567

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10669

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, IT

SUBJECT: THE ANDREOTTI VISIT; PART V, PROFILE OF FOREIGN MIN-
ISTER FORLANI

1. ARNALDO FORLANI, THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WHO WILL BE ACCOMPANYING PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI TO THE UNITED STATES, IS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT (DC) PARTY IN HIS OWN RIGHT. THE CANDIDATE OF THE MODERATE WING OF HIS PARTY FOR ELECTION AS PARTY SECRETARY AT THE LAST DC PARTY CONGRESS IN MARCH 1976, FORLANI WAS NARROWLY DEFEATED BY BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI. IN THAT CLOSE TEST, THE VOTES COMMANDED BY ANDREOTTI'S SMALL, CENTRIST FACTION TIPPED THE BALANCE IN FAVOR OF ZACCAGNINI, A PROTEGE' OF MORO. ANDREOTTI AND FORLANI HAVE NEVER BEEN CLOSE, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A POTENTIAL RIVAL FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION.

2. A MEMBER OF THE DC POLICYMAKING DIRECTORATE, FORLANI OWES MUCH OF HIS RISE IN DC POLITICS TO HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER FANFANI. FORLANI HAS SOUGHT WITH SOME SUCCESS TO CULTIVATE A MORE INDEPENDENT IMAGE AS A POLITICAL MODERATE. FROM 1969 TO 1973 HE
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SERVED AS DC PARTY SECRETARY. SINCE MISSING RE-ELECTION TO THAT POST LAST YEAR, FORLANI HAS VIRTUALLY DISASSOCIATED HIMSELF FROM ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN DC POLITICS. ACCORDING TO A CLOSE ASSOCIATE, FORLANI BELIEVES THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE OPENLY TO DECLARE HIS CANDIDACY TO SUCCEED EITHER ANDREOTTI OR ZACCAGNINI. MEANWHILE, HE HAS TAKEN CARE NOT TO BE ASSOCIATED TOO

CLOSELY WITH ANDREOTTI. THE MOST TELLING EXAMPLE OF FORLANI'S POLITICAL CAUTION IN THIS REGARD WAS HIS LAST-MINUTE DECISION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN DECEMBER 1976. AS ANDREOTTI'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON DURING A PERIOD OF POLITICAL TRANSITION WAS WIDELY CRITICIZED IN ITALY AS ILL-CONCEIVED, FORLANI FOUND A PLAUSIBLE PRETEXT (THE PARLIAMENTARY DELIBERATIONS ON THE ITALIAN-YUGOSLAV BORDER TREATY) ON WHICH TO WITHDRAW.

3. IF POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES CALL FOR A DC MODERATE TO HEAD EITHER THE PARTY OR A GOVERNMENT IN THE FUTURE, FORLANI WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE A PROMINENT CANDIDATE FOR EITHER POST. UNLIKE FANFANI, HE IS NOT A "RETREAD" AND HE HAS THE ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE OF A REPUTATION FOR HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN BOTH PERSONAL AND POLITICAL DEALINGS. FURTHERMORE, AT 52, FORLANI IS RELATIVELY YOUNG FOR THE CLASS OF ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADERS. ON THE COMMUNIST ISSUE, FORLANI REPRESENTS THE MAINSTREAM OF THE PARTY'S THINKING IN FIRMLY OPPOSING ANY DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF THE PCI IN THE GOVERNMENT.

4. FORLANI'S PRIMARY -- AND PERHAPS FATAL -- POLITICAL FLAW IS HIS EXCESSIVELY CAUTIOUS NATURE. HIS NARROW DEFEAT FOR THE PARTY SECRETARYSHIP COULD BE ATTRIBUTED

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BUTED, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, TO A LACK OF DECISIVENESS AND A CERTAIN RELUCTANCE NOT TO COMMIT HIMSELF BEFORE THE LAST MINUTE. ALTHOUGH HE IS CHARMING, INTELLIGENT, AND ARTICULATE, EVEN HIS ASSOCIATES COMPLAIN THAT HE FREQUENTLY IS UNPREPARED AND IS CONSEQUENTLY INEFFECTIVE.

5. AS FOREIGN MINISTER, FORLANI HAS BEEN AN ARTICULATE SPOKESMAN ABROAD FOR ITALY'S TRADITIONAL FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS. AT HOME, HOWEVER, WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, HE IS OFTEN THE SUBJECT OF DERISIVE CRITICISM FOR HIS LAZINESS, LOOSE CONTROL OVER SUBORDINATES, AND DUBIOUS JUDGMENT IN SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH LIGHT-WEIGHTS. BETWEEN 1974 AND 1976, FORLANI SERVED AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE. ITALIAN MILITARY LEADERS WERE ALSO OPENLY HIGHLY CRITICAL OF HIS PERFORMANCE THERE, AND ONE SENIOR OFFICER FLATLY CALLED HIS TENURE AT DEFENSE A "REAL DISASTER."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME10669
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770231-0295
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770610/aaaaaixk.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 49058072-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1993841
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE ANDREOTTI VISIT; PART V, PROFILE OF FOREIGN MIN- ISTER FORLANI
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, IT, (FORLANI, ARNALDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/49058072-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009